

**King County Agriculture Commission
Minutes from September 9, 2004
Sno-Valley Senior Center
Carnation, WA**

Commissioners Present: George Irwin, Dick Gradwohl, Gaylia Bullock, Grant Davidson, Ben Kodama, Judy Duff, Ewing Stringfellow, Jason Roetcisoender and Michael Blakely

Commissioners Absent: Roger Calhoon, Nancy Hutto and Bob Tidball

Staff: Eric Nelson, Claire Dyckman, Steve Evans, Laurie Clinton, King County (KC) Dept. of Natural Resources and Parks (DNRP) Agriculture Programs

Guest Agency Staff: Lauren Smith, Council Staff, King County Council; Sarah Ogier, Ground Water Protection, KCDNRP; Sandra Kilroy, Snoqualmie Watershed Forum, KCDNRP Acquisitions Program; Sheri Swanson, Farm Planner, King Conservation District (KCD)

Guests: Anne Mack, Marguerite Sutherland, Bill Knutsen and Ward Roney

Chair Judy Duff called the meeting to order at 4:07pm. She welcomed and thanked everyone for attending especially fellow Commissioners; she knows how hard it was to get out of the field today, with days getting shorter and said she appreciated their effort. Judy reviewed the agenda and added Claire presenting the request from the King Conservation District (KCD) Board of Directors regarding the Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) administrative rule on agriculture, after Committee Reports.

Motion 01-0904 Ben made the motion to approve the agenda as changed and Ewing seconded. Passed unanimously.

Roll call – Those present identified themselves as shown above. Nancy, Roger and Bob had notified staff to be excused. (*note: Michael and Jason arrived after roll call*)

Commission Roundabout

Gaylia Bullock mentioned the Fairs that are up and going. She had just arrived from setting her sheep up at the Puyallup. She also told about the national ewe lamb replacement program.

Ewing Stringfellow commented that it had been a good hot summer for those cutting growing hay. He also reported that is getting much harder to get good quality steers because the market is tight and there are only two cattle auctions left in the state.

Judy Duff let everyone know that the Farm Specialist letter has gone out. She said it is a very strong letter in support of ag and clearly states the importance of the position.

George Irwin reiterated Gaylia's comments about the Fairs being in full swing. He also added that the cattle market is very strong and the best it has been in twenty years. Prices are double what they have been. A major reason for the tight market is the border closure because of Canada's BSE issues.

Ben Kodama brought copies of articles on the current situation in the LWYSA to share with fellow commissioners in regards to the Commission's vote taken on the Farmland & Fields proposal.

Grant Davidson told about the filming done yesterday by KONG-TV at the market featuring former Ag Commissioner Chris Curtis. He said that on Monday the 13th, the WA State Farmer's Market Association will have a booth to do a rapid market assessment to evaluate how things are working.

Approval of Minutes

Motion 02-0904 George made the motion to accept the August minutes and Grant seconded. Passed unanimously.

Agency Reports

King Conservation District: Sherry reported that requests for Farm Management Plans remain high. Landowners are currently experiencing a three month wait for the plans. She said the District feels this increase in requests could be due to the upcoming Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO). She provided the schedule for upcoming tours and workshops and a review of the Farm Bill programs they handle.

Public Comment

Ann Mack expressed her concern with a paragraph regarding farm land in the Bear Creek Recreation Partnership document. She requested an explanation of the actual meaning.

Commission Business

Ag Program Committee: Dick, Ben, Bob, Grant and Steve met at Dick's farm to work on developing a template of qualifications for ag land parcels owned by the County that are going into surplus. One category they identified to encourage active farming would be to require enrollment of property upon purchase into a current use tax program. Judy H. took the entire list to the prosecuting attorney and she will get back to the Committee when she gets a response. Steve said the next meeting date is September 27th, but since that is the day of the KC Council Ag & Forest Town Meeting in Issaquah they will reschedule. All Commissioners were encouraged to attend the Ag & Forest Town Meeting.

Regulatory and Land Use Committee: Eric led the discussion on the proposed Comprehensive Plan and zoning code changes. He said that Councilmember Dow Constantine, Chair of the Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee had requested a response by tomorrow on the Commission's answers to his letter. Discussion ensued which included adding a disclaimer that while there are good changes; the Commission does not want to see rural growth at the expense of agriculture and to add rural agriculture to any ag changes or additions. Council staff Lauren Smith extended a thank you from Chair Constantine for the Commission's quick response and the time they have given to reviewing the Comp Plan and zoning code and making their amendment recommendations.

Motion 03-0904 George made the motion to submit the Commission's Regulatory and Land Use Committee's August 26, 2004 Responses to the County Council's Growth Management and Unincorporated Areas Committee's (GMUAC) recommendations on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and zoning code changes, with the edit of changing "unnecessary" to "necessary" on page 2, #42. Dick seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Critical Areas Ordinance (CAO) Ag Rule Discussion

Claire came with a request from the KCD Board of Directors for comments regarding the CAO Agricultural Activities Administrative Rule. She said that while the Ag Commission had responded at length on the first draft of the CAO, they had not made any formal response to the Ag Rule draft document which the KCD Board and staff are currently working on. The Draft Agricultural Activities Administrative Rule was handed out to Commissioners. Claire apprised the Commission on the key points and issues which included: KCD doesn't want to lose their non-regulatory role; KCD Farm Management Plans (FMPs) are done to Pacific Northwest standards and they don't want to lose their role as experts; decision whether or not to note FMP on title; assurance that FMP's meet county codes; and proposal for a generic notice for all permits that have critical areas on the property. Commissioners responded to the draft as they reviewed it. Claire asked if the Commission felt they wanted to show support of the CAO and the KCD FMPs. Members were somewhat reticent to bring the question to vote as they had not had much time for discussion. But since it was important for Council to hear from them while the rule was currently being debated, it was agreed to have an ad hoc sub-committee draft a letter and email it to Commissioners for comment and then those three would give final approval. George, Judy and Ewing volunteered. Claire will be the contact for the letter.

Motion 04-0904 Ben made the motion to authorize the above mentioned sub-committee to send a letter to the Council showing support for the CAO Agriculture Activities Administrative Rule, after Commissioners have submitted their edits. Gaylia seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Snoqualmie Watershed Forum & (Watershed Resource Inventory Area)WRIA 7 Presentation

Sandra Kilroy addressed ag issues in regards to the Watershed Forum as she presented an overview of its mission and work and how it fits within the WRIA 7 planning. She said that Bill Knutsen and Bob

Tidball's efforts in collaboration with KC Ag Program staff resulted in a solid strategy for agriculture lands. This resulted in the text for the Section 8.0, Recommended Recovery Strategies by Land Use Category (Draft Snohomish River Basin Salmon Conservation Plan) pages 8-1 through 8-3. Sandra's PowerPoint presentation on the Draft Snohomish Basin Salmon Conservation Plan provided excellent detail that included: the need for a plan; salmon statistics and habitat needs; composition of the draft plan; 10-year habitat and basin milestones; recommended strategies for land uses; strategy for working with agriculture; and recovery focus areas. She noted that public input ends October 29th, developing a funding strategy is key to implementation and the final plan is due out in June, 2005. There were a lot of comments and questions from Commissioners on past and present conditions of the rivers, impacts on ag, and the contribution of ag in salmon restoration. Sandra asked the Commission for input and stressed the importance of hearing from them regarding the draft plan. Judy thanked her for the detailed presentation.

East King County Groundwater Protection Committee and Program Presentation

Sarah Ogier provided a comprehensive report with her PowerPoint presentation covering groundwater fundamentals; groundwater management issues; groundwater and agriculture issues such as drainage, irrigation and water supply and valuable recharge potential; and the King County Groundwater Protection Program. She explained how the program was established by King County Code 9.14 and the decisions and findings derived from the work of staff along with the four Groundwater Protection Committees. The Committees are comprised of citizens, businesses, utility districts and city representatives. The information collected and activities undertaken includes groundwater monitoring data analysis; mapping; public education and outreach; and policy analysis and development such as the new Critical Aquifer Recharge Area (CARA) included in the CAO; and Comp Plan amendments. Sarah explained that current funding is temporary and future funding is being secured through interlocal agreements (ILAs) for specific Groundwater Management Area (GWMA) services. A dedicated funding source is necessary for long-term stability of the program. She encouraged the Commission to provide their comments and questions. There will be a new report out next month which she will get to Laurie for distribution to the Commission. Judy thanked Sarah for taking the time to provide the Commission with this important information.

Old Business

Judy asked Commissioners if they had any comments to the draft Farmlands & Fields response letter to the Executive that Laurie had handed out at the beginning of the meeting. This letter was to inform the Executive why the Commission did not provide a favorable recommendation for the Farmlands & Fields proposal. Commissioners felt it fairly captured the reasons for the decision which was made after hours of presentations and discussions.

Motion 05-0904 Dick made the motion to approve the draft letter dated September 9. Michaelae seconded and motion passed unanimously.

Meeting adjourned at 7:10pm.